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**State Agricultural Development Board Approves \$9,000 for Wayne County
Tomato Growers**

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board voted today to approve a \$9,000 grant request submitted by the Wayne County Tomato Growers to establish a backup supply of tomato plants for this growing season. The award will cover half of the costs incurred by Wayne County tomato growers in their purchase of additional tomato plants for this growing season. The application was reviewed by the Wayne County Agricultural Development Council and forwarded to the state board as a high priority item. Funds come from \$416,926 set aside for Wayne County in the Agricultural Development Fund established with half of Kentucky's tobacco settlement proceeds.

The Wayne County Tomato Growers will utilize the funds to increase tomato production and marketing efforts through the Cumberland Farm Products produce cooperative. Governor Patton praised the Board's action to boost the efforts of Wayne County tomato growers.

"This action means that Wayne County tomato growers will be able to increase their production and generate additional income. This is an investment in an aggressive group of producers looking for income alternatives, in their agricultural diversification efforts, and in the future of agriculture in one of our state's most progressive agricultural counties," said Governor Paul Patton.

The award was made as one of eleven projects approved by the Board during its meeting today. The Board approved a total of \$4,443,000 in state level projects, and \$403,600 in a variety of county-level programs, including Wayne County Tomato Growers.

"The vegetable industry is a viable alternative for tobacco growers with small acreages," Agriculture Commissioner Billy Ray Smith said. "It also is a fast-growing segment of Kentucky agriculture. We are pleased to help the Wayne County Tomato Growers expand their operations."

"The Agricultural Development Fund has given us the ability to ensure that we will be able to produce the quantity of tomatoes needed to meet demand," said Glen Roberts of the Wayne County Tomato Growers. "We've been needing this for years."